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THE CHURCHES IN ACTION

NEWS LETTER

OF THE

UNIVERSAL CHRISTIAN COUNCIL FOR LIFE AND WORK

AND THE

WORLD ALLIANCE FOR INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE CHURCHES

Published quarterly in English, French and German.

The above-mentioned organisations are not officially responsible for the opinions expressed in this New Letter
Reprint invited. Acknowledgement will be appreciated.

Price : 2 Swiss francs a year. Post Cheque No. I. 572. Geneva. H.-L. Henriod, *General Secretary*

No. 13. 41, Avenue de Champel, Geneva February 1937

BISHOP AMMUNDSEN

Endeavours towards Christian unity, and more particularly those represented by the World Alliance for International Friendship and the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work, have suffered severely in the past year through the deaths of several pioneers. A new loss, and an irreparable one in the human view, befell us, together with his family, his diocese and all those from far and near who were privileged to work with him, when Bishop Ammundsen passed away on December 1,1936.

Born on August 19,1875, into a Danish pastoral family, Valdemar Ammundsen won high honours as a student of theology, and as early as 1901 was appointed Professor of Church History in the Faculty of Theology of Copenhagen University, a chair which he occupied with distinction for over twenty years. His intellectual gifts, his capacity as a teacher and his great heart won him the confidence of his students and of his colleagues alike. His reputation spread rapidly beyond the frontiers of Denmark, through his notable works on Luther, on the history of the Church in the nineteenth century and on other subjects, and through the interest which he maintained in missionary questions and very particularly in social problems. In 1917 the University of Oslo conferred upon him the degree of Doctor *honoris causa*. In the course of his professorial career, he took a keen interest in the religious life of his students. For many years the Student Christian Movement of Denmark had the benefit of his counsel and of his presence as chairman at their annual meetings ; and the World's Student Christian Federation regarded him as a senior member to whom it owed a great debt of gratitude.

From his early years, Professor Ammundsen concerned himself with the minorities question and followed closely international affairs. His wide knowledge of the Schleswig problem obviously marked him out for leadership in the diocese of Haderslev, a large part of which had been returned to Denmark after the World War ; and in 1923 Professor Ammundsen became Bishop of Haderslev, a particularly difficult position which he held with a tact and an authority in which were combined a sense of equity and good humour and, above all, a religious strength which brought him the respect of everyone, even in the most critical situations.

In Bishop Ammundsen the World Alliance for International Friendship found from the beginning an enthusiastic worker and a wise counsellor, and it set great store by his opinions. He became in course of time its Vice-President, and then Chairman of the Management Committee. With the establishment of the Minorities Commission in 1930, he undertook its chairmanship and when, in 1935, Lord Dickinson resigned the presidency of the Alliance, the name of Bishop Ammundsen was put forward on all hands as

his successor. Regional conferences, frequent sessions of the Officers' Meeting and of the Executive Committee, with thorny problems coming up for discussion, were always characterised by a complete candour, a loftiness of thought, a spirit of fairness and of charity, thanks to the predominating influence exercised by Bishop Ammundsen, but without his ever seeking to impose his point of view. In his personality wisdom and modesty and a practised Christianity were enhanced by a sense of humour that was full of savour and in which malice had no place.

As a friend and fellow-worker of Archbishop Soederblom, Bishop Ammundsen played an important part in the preparation and success of the great Stockholm Conference and he was one of the authors of the Message which it issued. In addition to his heavy responsibilities in Denmark and in the management of the World Alliance, he assumed the Vice-Presidency of the European Continental Section of the Universal Christian Council and became Acting-President of the Section in 1933. A member of the Administrative Committee of the Council, he was actively engaged in the preparations for the Oxford Conference, of which he was to have been one of the Presidents. He formed a living bond between the World Alliance and the Universal Christian Council and did more than anyone to facilitate still closer collaboration.

In 1934 Bishop Ammundsen was the genial and devoted host of the memorable oecumenical gathering held at Fanö, and he gave, too, religious inspiration through the beautiful service which he conducted. Lastly, at Chamby, in 1936, it was his remarkable address on the international situation which formed the culminating point of the meeting of the Management Committee of the Alliance. That address, to which he had intended to put the finishing touches before its despatch to the printer, will be published very shortly in three languages : it gives a last expression to the distress, but also to the Christian faith, of one of the most respected and beloved personalities of the great oecumenical family, and it reveals a conception of international understanding based on the Gospel.

« In Bishop Ammundsen », said the Primate of the Lutheran Church of Denmark, « we lose the greatest of our churchmen ». « He was the best informed and the wisest of our church leaders », wrote Dr. Neiendamm, « not only through his knowledge, but also because of his far-reaching relations with other churches ». For all those who knew him and valued him in his international activity, Bishop Ammundsen remains one of the matchless figures of the Church Universal. Testimonies to this fact have reached us from many countries, confessions and spheres of life.

Far above the average in intellectual and linguistic gifts, and in depth of feeling and of wisdom, Bishop Ammundsen was even more exceptional on account of the dignified simplicity, the affection and the serenity of faith that radiated from him. It is for those who rejoiced in his friendship and collaboration, in fidelity to his memory to put in God the same confidence that he showed and their strength and lives at the disposal of the great cause which he served.

H. L. H.

LIFE AND WORK

OXFORD AND THE CHURCHES OF THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT

Within the churches of the continent of Europe, the preparatory work for the World Conference to be held in Oxford has not proceeded under the same kind of centralised organisation that has been achieved in Great Britain and in the United States and Canada, through the formation of Advisory Councils composed of outstanding church men and women from all spheres of social and political life. But for that very reason it has been possible, in preparing for Oxford among the continental churches, where oecumenical roots already to some extent went deeper, to develop the whole abundance and diversity of possibilities for oecumenical work. The conflict between *the Church and the World* has perhaps been encountered in the European countries with greater force, and has been lived through more intensely than in the Anglo-Saxon countries, where the effects of the world-wide appearances of crisis penetrated more slowly into the social, political and spiritual spheres. But the question of the Church and the World is the final issue for Oxford, and for this whole oecumenical study work on « Church, Community and State » ; for a comprehensive re-thinking of the whole Christian conception of the State is concentrated, so to speak, at a particularly endangered point in this struggle over the Church and the World, « ...since on these practical issues is focussed the great and critical debate between the Christian faith and the secular tendencies of our time. » (Resolution of the Universal Christian Council at Fanö).

When the Universal Christian Council decided at its Fanö meeting to summon the churches to

a world conference on Church, Community and State, the call for cooperation met, in a number of European churches, with a readiness, already apparent in the preceding years, to prepare for the *central oecumenical study conferences* through *national study groups* or individual *national study meetings*. The basic oecumenical study conference held, for instance, in Paris in April 1934, on « The Church and the State of Today »[1] included in its supporting source material the preparatory work done by national study groups and meetings in Germany and Sweden, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, France and Switzerland ; in Czechoslovakia such a national study conference assembled the representatives of six different churches or groups of churches. This kind of collaboration, which it was possible to carry out with the assistance of study outlines and basic material from the Research Department of the Universal Christian Council, was developed still further in the following year, when it came to the organising of the oecumenical study conferences of Schloss Hemmen, in May 1935, on « The Totalitarian Claims of the Modern State and the Christian Conception of Freedom »[2], and the study conference of Sigtuna, Sweden, in October 1935, on « Church and Community in the Oecumenical Light ». In addition to the preparatory study work undertaken through special national study groups and meetings, increasing attention was given to carrying out the almost more important subsequent work which, on the basis of the material and findings of the oecumenical study conferences, followed up the decisive problems for discussion in national study groups and meetings, as well as in conferences on a larger scale. In this way, in Holland, for instance, larger oecumenical conferences of theologians took place as an outcome of the oecumenical study conferences of Paris and Schloss Hemmen, assembling over a hundred representatives of the various groups of churches in the Netherlands in common study, and providing an opportunity for the formation of a number of smaller study groups.

While building up in this last year the preliminary study work on the nine main themes in preparation for Oxford[3], it has been possible to secure an essential part of the collaboration for the main contributions to this oecumenical exchange of thought from among the members of these study groups and conferences, for whom the work and aims of the whole oecumenical movement had already become a living reality. A number of the more responsible collaborators in the oecumenical research groups, who had been drawn into the work on the Christian conception of man, of history and of the common life, were furthermore able to build up on possibilities already existing, and often formed around themselves smaller, more specialised study groups to support them in the working out of their memoranda. In this way it has come about to an increasing extent that the theologian has had the support, in his basic theological studies, of sociologists, jurists and historians, while the jurist or sociologist, in his work on the problem of the state, the law, or the economic order, has been supported by the theologians, the philosophers, the pedagogists or the biologists. The study groups which were being formed here and there thus achieved in the years 1935 and 1936, in a number of churches and countries, considerable variety as to composition and further membership. *France*, for instance, succeeded, through the personal efforts of the President of the Protestant Federation, in forming nine central study groups corresponding to the nine main tasks of the preparatory work for Oxford, composed of leading laymen, theologians and clergy, and with chairmen or secretaries who are at the same time members of the corresponding oecumenical research groups. In *Sweden*, groups have been established at the university centres of Uppsala and Lund, in the form of study circles working on the nine themes of the preparatory work for Oxford. In *Germany* and in *Holland*, again, the systematic formation and extension of such study groups has been brought about by certain individual personalities or church organs, entrusted with the central responsibility for oecumenical study and research work. In view of the very different situation existing within *the Orthodox Churches*, it has been possible in Bulgaria, Greece, Yugoslavia, Roumania and Poland to take other steps for the mobilisation of suitable oecumenical collaboration. Here regional conferences, or central oecumenical study meetings on a smaller scale have been organised and have led to the formation of special study groups in Sofia and Belgrade, Bucarest and Athens. A specially active Orthodox study group has been formed among the Russian Orthodox theologians, philosophers, jurists and historians in Paris, and they have contributed to the work on a number of the main tasks in preparation for Oxford.

A further stage in the preparatory work for

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[1] See the study booklet : « *Die Kirche und das Staatsproblem in der Gegenwart* », published in « Kirche und Welt », Vol. 3, 2nd edition, Geneva 1935. 228 pages. Price Fr. 4.30.

[2] « *Totaler Staat und christliche Freiheit* », published in « Kirche und Welt », Vol. 7, Geneva, 1937. About 200 pages. Probable price Fr. 4. —

[3] See *Programme of the Work in Preparation for the World Conference of Churches, 1937 on Church, Community and State.* Price Fr. 0.10. 20 copies : Fr. 1.50. 100 copies : Fr. 5. —

Oxford has also been reached through the formation, by the responsible church organs, or by the oecumenical national councils or study committees appointed by the churches, especially in Holland and Germany, Sweden and Switzerland, of special study bodies to correspond to the five sections of the Oxford Conference itself[1]. They are to coordinate the national study work undertaken on the different main aspects of the whole theme of community, state, social order, education, the world of nations. The work of these groups will be of very special service for the elaboration of the vital discussion bases of the five sections of the Oxford Conference, and in particular for the *special preparation of the delegates*, in the different countries and churches, all of which activity can be of quite extraordinary importance for the conference's success. It is moreover essential for the whole study scheme that the work of these various national sectional groups should be more and more coordinated in common conferences, in order to give expression to the inner connection which links up all this study work. Here and there larger conferences, preliminary to Oxford, have been held, as for instance in Sweden, in October of last year, when a hundred and fifty leading representatives of the clergy and laity of the Nordic churches met together.

It is not possible within the limits of these brief notes to enter in more detail into the manifold ways and forms in which collaboration has developed, in groups of clergy and laymen, in student bodies and other study circles of the youth organisations, in seminars of theologians and jurists. Thankful as we may be for this whole wealth of oecumenical study work, which has been carried out with the utmost devotion, we must remain conscious of the fact that it only represents but a first incision into what we must hope for and continue to demand. Ultimately everything will depend on whether this work reaches wider circles of Christian people in the different countries, thus helping to bring really living communities and churches into being. The Oxford Conference and this whole oecumenical undertaking « will achieve its purpose only if it reaches beyond the intellectual sphere and becomes the expression of a Church which is a community of persons, in whose hearts is kindled the flame of evangelisation, who are finding the fulfilment of life in the acceptance of responsibility towards their fellow men, in mutual respect and reverence and service and love, and who draw inspiration and strength for such a life from hourly dependence in trust and obedience on One Who has revealed Himself to us as our Father and has called us to live as His sons »[2].

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[1] See *Programme of the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State.* Fr. 0.10. 20 copies : Fr. 1. —

[2] See Oldham, J. H. : *Church, Community and State : A World Issue*, S. C. M. Press, London, 1935. Price 1/—, p. 43.

WORLD ALLIANCE

THE UNA SANCTA AND THE WORLD OF NATIONS

By Dr. J. C. BAAK (Holland)

The point of departure, in setting out to establish the relations of the Church Universal and the world of nations is to be found in the need for realising on earth the demands of the Kingdom of God. As far as the nations in general are concerned, efforts towards such realisation of necessity take the form of rules and of institutions of law. The scholastic system of the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages attempted to facilitate these efforts by assuming the individual's gradual ascent towards the Divine Grace, on the basis of the Aristotelian theory of entelechy adapted to Christianity by Thomas Aquinas. At the Reformation, the harmony of this scholastic system was broken, the Reformers stressing once more the distance between human nature and grace and opposing the idea of natural law. With the humanists, the political struggle either became denuded of all moral and religious criteria, — as in Machiavelli, — or was submitted to the demands of the individual Christian conscience, as in Erasmus. Since the scholasticism of the Middle Ages, a relationship of principles has never been re-established between the Church Universal and the world of nations.

Contemporary history represents the period of the inter-dependent life of the sovereign states which base themselves, in the final analysis, on the principle of power and which submit in only a very incomplete and contradictory manner to a higher international law in which the right to make war constitutes an entirely uncertain factor.

However fruitful it may be for a very distant future, the natural law secularised by Grotius and his school, — to some extent developing the principles of Erasmus, — cannot in the centuries immediately before us effectively counterbalance the present tendency of the life of the sovereign states in their relations to one

another. After the various theoretical plans, more or less utopian, which were put forward in these last centuries with a view to achieving more thorough international cooperation, and after the failure of some practical endeavours, such as the Holy Alliance, the League of Nations appeared after the World War, as the first attempt at organised systematic collaboration between the states on the basis of the principle of law.

The churches have given only very inadequate expression to their views on this development. Some of them have vaguely supported the League of Nations and its policy, without emphasising what is specially Christian in the League's principles ; others have been particularly concerned from the Christian viewpoint with the problem of unilateral disarmament ; a few sects and individual ministers have declared themselves on the question of conscientious objection.

It is not of course suggested that the Scriptures should be searched for a line of conduct on which to establish a policy of international law, but in this domain efforts should certainly be made to understand and fulfil the conditions demanded by God, the Creator of heaven and earth, by accepting as a real basis everything that has come about in the course of history. And that requires of the Church Universal a clear refusal to formulate the demands of the order of creation as rules of law.

Although scholasticism did not deduce from the Divine Revelation the natural law of the Middle Ages, but founded it on the nature of man, none the less it systematically linked it up with the Divine Grace and this law was supported by the authority of the Catholic Church. In this system of natural law, war was justified under the three following conditions :

1) Auctoritas legitima. 2) Justa causa. (Violation of the law). 3) Recta intentio. (The purpose of war must only be to redress and punish injustice).

With the collapse of the Catholic system of the Middle Ages, the Church Universal can no longer revert to such a system. From the practical point of view, this system may be reproached with not having attached itself to any general system of philosophy, and with corresponding only very partially to the actual development of international law. As to principles, it may be criticised as having codified the exigencies of the order of creation as rules of law.

The Universal Christian Church must thus adopt an attitude of reserve towards the specific policy of the League of Nations, without for a moment losing sight of the principle of the League, which consists in making international law predominate over the will of each state. The deadlock which the League has reached in recent years is partly responsible for the doubts that have arisen as to whether the policy of the League of Nations suggests the true, logical method by which the states can live together, and whether the League Covenant provides at this moment the most convincing foundation for such life. What looked at first sight like progress in the interests of systematic inter-state collaboration has at present the appearance of nothing more than an important experiment.

The Church Universal must declare itself every time that it is necessary, and whenever the commandments of Christ are at stake : « Thou shalt love the lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy mind and with all thy soul ». « Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself ». And for that reason the Una Sancta must uphold with all its strength :

1) The predominance of international law over the will of each state.

2) The rejection of the principle of war.

These two principles are directly founded on the New Testament and they are closely linked to one another.

1) The predominance of international law over the will of each state does not include a rejection of the « Clausula rebus sic stantibus » as a rule of law ; this « clausula » derives its origin from the theory of the interpretation and cancellation of treaties. But it must be more and more amplified by the formation of organisms competent to revise in a pacific manner treaties that are in force. This predominance includes among other factors the rejection of the unilateral cancellation of treaties, when such cancellation is based on the negation of the commandments of God, or when it arises out of a desire arbitrarily to impose an individual will on the world. The predominance of international law thus includes already, in principle, the rejection of war.

Actually the problem of war has entered upon a new phase, although the Christian conscience has always and rightly regarded war as the result of sin. The public authority bears the sword because of sin, — (Romans 13 : 3-4), — both against its own subjects and against foreign states. But in bearing the sword the public authority has itself entered into the sphere of sin, which it is called upon to limit in its consequences. The sword is thus two-edged : it can be turned towards the limitation but also towards the extension of sin. If the public authority uses the sword exclusively for the repression of sin, it can contribute to the maintenance of the fallen creation ; if it also employs the sword as an end in itself, then the public authority is in its turn in revolt against God. The danger that the public authority may also fall into sin is greater in the sphere of international relations

than in that of the interior affairs of the state, for the following reasons :

1) Between the states there is no judge who may be called upon to decide as to the material justice of a case of aggression, nor is there a police force to constrain the aggressor.

2) The states are greatly tempted to set aside any criterion of justice and to regard their own interests as the sole justification for war, all the more so if they imagine that they are serving the collective interests of their peoples.

3) The modern technical method of making war is so far removed from any possible juridical justification for war, that it possible to see in it an end in itself, and on that count the public authority rebels against God.

It is thus interesting to note that the questions of « justa causa » and « recta intentio » of the mediaeval system of law encounter more and more the problem of how to make war : in other words, the method of warfare is becoming more important than the causes which determine war. The development of international law (article 11 of the League Covenant and of the Kellogg Pact) follows this line. It is, however, an error to regard the different motives of war (aggression, sanction, execution, defence) as being equal ; because of sin the common organism of the nations may be called upon at certain moments to bear the sword against the individual state which has violated the law.

Granting the condemnation of the principle of war, it is none the less impossible, according to the Gospel, to regard war as something forbidden to the Christian in all circumstances or, on the other hand, to say that Christians who hold this latter view are wrong.

The Church Universal cannot do more than confine itself to throwing light on all the given facts, from the Christian standpoint ; it cannot make casuistical distinctions by applying abstract norms, thus imposing its own decisions on the conscience of the individual. In the last resort the individual, on the authority of the Word of God, must decide in each particular case. Everyone must have a conviction.God alone is Lord of the conscience.

THE INTERNATIONAL GOODWILL CONGRESS

The American Branch of the World Alliance held its twenty-first annual meeting in Denver, Colorado, November 9 to 11, 1936. Following its usual custom, the meeting was in the nature of an International Goodwill Congress and took place during the Armistice season. The usual preliminary meetings were also held for a period of several days preceding the formal opening of the Congress. Eighty-five such meetings took place in high schools, colleges, universities, men's civic clubs, women's clubs, churches, synagogues and other institutions. The speakers occupied the pulpits of thirty-nine churches on Sunday, November 8, some of their addresses being broadcast. Not only were the speakers in churches which are considered among the most influential, but negro churches and smaller churches were included.

It would be difficult to say which was the best of all the sessions. The United Ministers Meeting, to discuss « The Stake of Religion in World Peace », would be considered the most helpful by some. Others would prefer the Round Tables which dealt with such topics as Economic Justice, Disarmament and Control of Munitions, the League of Nations, and Relations in the Pacific. Still others would prefer the panel discussion which occupied the afternoon following the Round Tables, and at which the problem of raw materials, territories, colonies, imperialism and other related topics was discussed. The Youth Meeting certainly made the deepest impression on the youth of Denver. One thousand assembled, and hundreds could gain no entrance for lack of room. Another session which appealed to many addressed itself to the subject of « Religion in Action for World Peace ». Some felt that the best occasion was the Armistice Eve banquet which crowded the ballroom of the hotel to capacity, while others agreed that the Memorial service on Armistice Day which was addressed by the Bishop of Albany, was the most inspiring and helpful of all.

There was an average attendance of 500 persons at the various sessions. An added interest was developed in the meetings through the cooperation with the Colorado Cause and Cure of War Committee, the Church Peace Union, the Commission on International Justice and Goodwill of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, and the League of Nations Association.

Two business sessions were held, at one of which was presented the report of the Committee on Message and Recommendations, and at the other the report of the Committee on Nominations and the Election of Officers. The report of the Committe on Message led to the adoption of the following principles :

1. The members of every church should become intelligent as to the relations of the United States to other nations, the conditions under which peace is threatened, and the various efforts now being made to prevent war.
2. Churches must teach that war is a denial of our faith in a God of love and justice.
3. Moral principles must be applied to the economic and racial factors of international relations.

4. Church members should be helped to see the moral dangers involved in international enmities.
5. In case of war the motive of American neutrality should not be selfish isolation but a conservation of resources to serve a suffering world.
6. Churches, as well as individuals, should support intelligent legislation and cooperative efforts intended to prevent war.
7. If nations are to avoid misery, they, as well as individuals, must conform to and can be aided by the will of God. »

Included in the programme adopted for work of the Alliance during 1937 there is a strong desire expressed in favour of the passage by Congress of a neutrality bill which would include an embargo on loans and credits to belligerent nations. This would be an extension of the present neutrality bill and would greatly strengthen it.

With reference to the United States and International Agencies, the Congress voted that :

« We support our nation's membership in the International Labour Bureau and urge continued and increasing cooperation of our government with the League of Nations and its various departments. We believe our country should give concrete evidence of its desire to have disputes between nations settled by law instead of war, by prompt adherence to the World Court. »

The congress was equally strong on the problem of racial justice, demanding equal justice for all men and the removal of the barriers of race, colour and creed ; denouncing racial arrogance and the predatory spirit by which weak and backward peoples are exploited and despoiled by the strong and advocating amendment of the immigration laws of the United States to the benefit of citizens of China and Japan.

Running like a thread through the entire Congress was the question of economic justice, and a resolution was adopted urging the President to cooperate, to the fullest practicable extent, in the calling of a World Conference on common problems of economic justice, such as tariffs, trade regulations, stabilisation of currencies, colonies and mandates, outlets for excess populations, access to raw materials and other essentials of life, in a spirit which subordinates national advantage to the common good.

The congress was opposed to compulsory military training in schools and colleges. It also urged the advisability of combining the war and navy departments into a single Department of National Defence.

Finally the congress emphasised :

« We would make it clear that the World Alliance while giving wholehearted support to all agencies and methods for attaining peace, lays its chief stress on friendship and understanding. The best machinery conceivable will fail unless infused and supported by the spirit of good will, and since this is a spiritual activity we seek to promote such friendship through the Churches, which alone can provide the spiritual dynamic equal to the task.

« Our endeavour is based fundamentally on faith in God and our conviction that it is His will that we should have a peaceful and ordered world. 'God wills it' is our motto and we know that with Him, 'all things are possible'. We, therefore, call upon all men everywhere to turn to God in humble supplication, beseeching Him to pardon our past lukewarmness and half-heartedness and stir up within us such zeal and consecration as will make us fit instruments in His hand to fulfil the prophecies of the Angelic Hosts of 'peace on earth to men of good will' ».

The Committee on Nominations presented the resignation of Dr. William Pierson Merrill. Dr. Merrill has been President of the American Branch of the World Alliance for International Friendship since its beginning. For many years, he has also been President of the Church Peace Union. It was his feeling that these organisations should not have the same man as President at the same time, and so the World Alliance with great reluctance accepted his resignation. In his stead was elected the Right Rev. George Ashton Oldham, of the Cathedral of Albany, New York. Bishop Oldham is one of the well-known bishops of the Episcopal Church in the United States, and has long been devoted to the cause of international justice and goodwill.

(*From an article by Dr Linley V. Gordon.*)

PREPARATIONS FOR OXFORD

The study of the subject : « The Church Universal and the World of Nations », which the World Alliance has undertaken in preparation for the Oxford Conference, is being actively carried out in many National Councils.

We hear from Professor Zankow that study groups have been at work in *Bulgaria* ever since a decision was taken to cooperate in this direction. Moreover, the presence in Athens, on the occasion of the recent Orthodox Congress of Theologians, of a number of leading representatives of the Orthodox Churches of *the Balkans*, afforded an opportunity for general discussion on oecumenical collaboration, and in particular on the possibilities of cooperation and exchange of thought in connection with this special aspect of the Oxford preparations.

In *Germany*, the National Council has secured the support of special study groups in universities, large cities and among its own immediate circle. A central committee of specialists is dealing with a series of questions closely connected with the international problems which are indicated in the programme of the work in preparation for the Conference. Particular attention has been given to the study of the questions of Church and Community, Christianity and Nation, as

being basically preliminary to any treatment of the subject of the Church Universal and the World of Nations. Stress has also been laid on the problems of education and, in the light of the problem of international order, on the fundamental questions of the common life. This committee of specialists has succeeded in mobilising the services of expert theologians and of outstanding laymen as well, including historians and professors of state and international law.

In *Great Britain*, study groups have been active for the past eighteen months, on the basis of their own material, and also using that circulated by the Research Department of the Universal Christian Council.

The many study circles which have been formed in *Sweden* include in their number a group which has devoted particular attention to the problem of « Church and Community », leading up to concentration on the whole question of the Church and the world of nations.

In the *United States*, the following decision was adopted at the Denver meeting in November last :

« The American Council of the World Alliance endorses and pledges itself to work for the success of the Oxford Conference to be held in July 1937. Inasmuch as one of the issues will be that of the Churches' relation to the question of war and peace, a commission has been appointed to prepare a report to be submitted to the Conference when it meets. The American Council votes to appoint a committee of three, appointment to be made by the Executive Committee, to cooperate in the preparation of a statement representing the point of view of the American Churches and offers its services in other ways to make the Conference a success ».

GENERAL NEWS ITEMS

FAITH AND ORDER

There is little to chronicle in the way of news. The sole aim of the movement is to promote *conference* between delegates officially appointed by the Churches, with a view to removing the obstacles in the way of unity. For years we have been preparing for the Second World Conference to be held at Edinburgh in August. The commissions which have been preparing the material for discussion are now putting the finishing touches to their reports. These will be issued between now and August and will be the agenda papers for the Conference. What will happen then ?

As this number of *The Churches in Action* is to be issued at a time when there is a lull in the supply of news, it may be worth while to consider briefly some of the problems which this question suggests to my mind as I look forward to the Conference in the light of my secretarial correspondence during the last three years.

During these three years the Continuation Committee has held meetings each summer. On each occasion some seventy to eighty members have assembled, drawn from a wide variety of churches and countries. They leave memories of a growing sense of a deep underlying unity rooted in our common allegiance to the one Lord and Master — a sense of unity which makes one eager and anxious to learn from those of different and unfamiliar traditions what they have to say about the Christian faith as they hold it. This is largely due to the fact that at those meetings a majority of those present have been men who have had long experience of such intercourse with fellow-Christians in the movement. Ties of mutual affection and respect have been forged which make it possible to combine firm loyalty to truth with readiness to listen and learn from others. Genuine conference, as contrasted with controversy, has become possible.

How far shall we be able to reproduce this spirit at Edinburgh ? The conditions will be very different. The majority of those present will no longer be men who have learned to know and trust one another, but men who meet as strangers, and who will be strongly conscious of their duty to represent faithfully the churches who have appointed them as their delegates. The numbers will be larger, the time for growing in mutual respect and trust all too short. Moreover the task to be performed will impose an added strain. At the meetings of the Continuation Committee and of its commissions the aim has been to elucidate the questions to be discussed at Edinburgh. At Edinburgh will come the actual discussion, and the attempt to formulate what measure of agreement can be registered in the report to the participating churches.

Much will depend upon the extent to which in the early sessions the larger Conference will be able to catch the spirit which has come to pervade the 1927 Continuation Committee, and to do its work in the atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. For the gift of this spirit we must all earnestly pray in the intervening months.

It may help to prepare the way for it if we face in advance some of the chief difficulties likely to arise. « Forewarned is forearmed. »

Perhaps one of the biggest difficulties will be presented by differences of national temperament. Contrast, for example, the typically British outlook with that which is characteristic of the

German. I write as an Englishman and stand subject to correction by those who know other races better than I do. There seems to me to be this contrast. The Englishman tends to regard the history of Christian thought as a flowing stream into which ideas flow as tributaries. Those which are true enrich it with fresh insights; those which are false infect it with poison. The important thing is to secure every possible enrichment, and to trust in the power of the main current of truth to sweep aside or neutralise any poison that may threaten to infect it. But for the German the history of Christian thought is not so much the flowing of a stream as the waging of a campaign. Truth is battling with error, and thought proceeds by the conflict of thesis with antithesis. To the Englishman the German appears unnecessarily combative; to the German the Englishman seems insufficiently staunch in his championship of truth. Growth in mutual knowledge leads to growth in understanding of one another's methods of approach, and only then does it become possible for either to begin to appreciate what the other stands for. How soon shall we be able to overcome this and similar difficulties at Edinburgh?

Again, there will be difficulties due to misunderstandings consequent upon differences of ecclesiastical tradition. It has to be remembered that in the Faith and Order Movement we are reviving discussion of the issues on which the Church was split at the time of the Reformation four centuries ago. During those centuries different groups of Christians have drifted further and further apart, developing their thought-forms and terminology along the lines of their own traditions in ways which make mutual understanding increasingly difficult. At Lausanne a beginning was made; but the ten following years have made it clear that it was only a beginning, and why. On the one hand, the traditions of continental European Protestantism, rooted in the doctrines of *sola gratia*, *sola fide*, *sola scriptura*, are unknown and alien territory to a large number of Orthodox and Anglican Christians, and to many British and American Protestants. On the other hand, many continental European Protestants are unaware how largely elements of traditional Catholicism are retained and treasured by Orthodox, Anglicans and many British and American Protestants. So great was this mutual ignorance that the three weeks available at Lausanne in 1927 were not enough to bring the facts clearly to light. The agreements there reached concealed an underlying fissure whose existence was hardly even suspected at the time. The post-Lausanne period has revealed it, and at Edinburgh we shall have to face it fairly and squarely. As I sit in my secretarial chair and review my correspondence of the past years it seems clear at present that Catholicism has preserved elements which Orthodox and Anglicans will never renounce because of their conviction that they enshrine important truths, but which many Protestants will denounce as involving Jewish legalism or pagan work-righteousness.

I am inclined to suggest that progress will depend on our realising the significance of the fact that while we are reviving the controversial issues of the sixteenth century, we are meeting in the twentieth century and not in the sixteenth. None of the main traditions of Christendom is now struggling for the bare right of existence in competition with others. Each has behind it four centuries of growth and expansion; the churches of each tradition are now world wide communions with such experience of divine blessings bearing rich fruits as to make their continuance secure. They can therefore afford to examine one another's claims with an open-minded sympathy impossible in days when their own existence was at stake. The spirit which has animated the meetings of the 1927 Continuation Committee bears witness to this possibility. At Edinburgh much will depend on the delegates feeling able to think and speak with a confidence and a freedom from nervous apprehension which was impossible in the sixteenth century but should be our birthright in the twentieth.

Why are we assembling this large Conference, with all its risks and difficulties, instead of being content to continue the smaller gatherings in which progress seems so much more certainly assured? It is because unity can only come by action of the churches themselves. The growth of a spirit of unity among non-representative individuals is not enough. The conference which is to prepare the way for unity must be conference between those whom the churches themselves entrust with the duty of representing them. The members of the 1927 Continuation Committee believe that they have been blessed with much evidence of the good hand of God upon their labours, and that it is by His guidance and in response to His call that they have been led to invite the churches to send their representatives to a second World Conference in. 1937. « Nothing venture, nothing win. » Firm in the faith that God wills unity for His Church on earth, that He will give it in His own good time, and that He calls us to prepare ourselves for the reception of the gift, we go forward with our venture, and look forward with confidence and hope to Edinburgh.

L. Hodgson,
Winchester, England.

January 1937.

THE PAN-ORTHODOX CONGRESS OF THEOLOGIANS

The first Pan-Orthodox Congress of Theologians was held in Athens from November 29 to December 4 last, under the chairmanship of Professor Alivisatos. After an inaugural service in the eleventh century University Church, the congress was opened by H. M. the King of Greece, and assembled representatives of the theological faculties of Athens, Bucarest, Kisinew-Jassy, Belgrade, Sofia, Warsaw, and of the Institute of Orthodox Theology in Paris.

The possibility and timeliness of holding such a congress had been visualised since 1922, and it came nearer fulfilment every time the members of the different Orthodox churches found an opportunity for its discussion when they met at the annual assemblies of the different branches of the oecumenical movement, in which the Orthodox churches take a regular and active part. It was indeed at the Copenhagen meeting of the World Alliance for International Friendship that the idea first took shape, largely on the initiative of Professor Alivisatos, and at that same organisation's meeting at Chamby, in 1935, the date, place and preliminary steps towards the drafting of the programme were decided upon. It may in fact be claimed that the post-war, intensified development of the oecumenical movement, synchronising as it did with the Oecumenical Patriarch's scheme for the formation of a « League of Churches », has done much to stimulate the spirit of collaboration within Orthodoxy which has facilitated the holding of this recent congress.

Taking advantage of the growth of this spirit, the congress set out to pave the way towards constructive, scientific action for the fulfilment of the nature, aims and obligations of the Orthodox church. Discussions took place on the basic principles of Orthodoxy (Professors Bulgakow, Scriban and Cristescu, of Roumania ; Florovsky and Zenkovsky, of Russia ; Zankow, of Bulgaria and Alivisatos, of Greece) ; on the question of free scientific research in theology, (with contributions from M. Vellas and Professor Antoniadès of Greece and Professor Kartaschoff of Russia). Considerable attention was devoted to the question of the newer Orthodox theology, in its relationship to the patristic theology and to modern theological methods and conceptions (with valuable addresses by Professor Balanos, of Greece, and Florovsky). Professor Stevan Dimitrievitch, of Belgrade, spoke on the question of the mission of theology for the enlightenment of ecclesiastical thought. Others matters debated were : the possibility of summoning an Oecumenical Synod ; the codification of the canon law ; the revision of ancient liturgical texts ; the responsibility of the Churches in social problems. Active steps were taken by the congress towards the foundation of an Orthodox theological review, and the gift of 30,000 lei, offered for this purpose by the Metropolitan of Bucovina, Mgr Bessarion, was accepted with profound gratitude and a commission appointed to handle the editorial aspect of the proposed review.

The congress urged upon its component churches the formation of commissions of theologians for the further study of the questions examined at Athens, and the following up as quickly and as closely as possible of the practical collaboration and solidarity that had been achieved. A detailed report of the congress is to be issued by the Theological Faculty of Athens University. A second congress of a similar nature will be held in Bucarest in 1939.

THE 1939 WORLD CONFERENCE OF CHRISTIAN YOUTH

The work of the Youth Commission is pointed increasingly toward the World Conference of Christian Youth to be held on the Continent of Europe in the summer of 1939.

An enterprise of such magnitude, undertaken in addition to the 1937 and 1938 international Christian world conferences, and attempted without precedent, will be a difficult task. Only the gravest circumstances could persuade the collaborating movements of the necessity and indeed of the feasibility of such a venture of faith in the midst of the present world crisis. It is precisely in the light of the world gatherings which will precede it, and of the tremendous issues which they will face, that the World Conference of Christian Youth has been conceived. As declared in its statement of objectives: « it aims at confronting youth with results of the world gatherings of the Christian Churches and the Christian Youth Movements in the years 1937 and 1938. Its purpose is to mobilize youth to witness to the reality of the Christian Community as the God-given supra-national body to which has been entrusted the message of victory over the world's spiritual, political and social confusion ». The Conference would in fact have little justification if it were to be an isolated event or in any sense an end in itself. But planned as a point of temporary concentration in a process which will precede it and follow it, it will be of crucial importance for the future relations of the churches to one another and to the Christian youth movements, and for the vitality of all these bodies in an increasingly hostile world.

The issues with which the world gatherings preceding the Youth Conference will grapple are of particular significance to the younger generation. Not only is youth the sorest victim of the stampede

to totalitarianism which challenge the very existence of a vital Christianity, but in the struggle for the future every contesting interest must count the younger generation as its highest prize. In this the cause of the Church and of all Christian movements can be no exception.

If the Christian forces are to hold their youth against the tide of world-wide defections to other loyalties with which the Christian faith is beset, they must act concertedly. In a day when mass commitments are captivating vast blocks of the world's most vigorous populations, every citadel of Christianity is faced potentially or actually with the same enemies. If it is to have vitality equal to the times, it must unite its diversified strengths for the common struggle against a common foe. Only by the exercise of the spiritual unity which it latently possesses in common allegiance to the one Lord of the Church, can the Christian faith fully appropriate for the battle which is upon it the powers vouchsafed it by the Grace of God. This is especially true in relations with young people, to whatever Christian body they may belong. Not always aware of the heritage which is theirs in the Universal Church, they must be aided more clearly to see, more definitely declare and more courageously live their oneness in the Christian faith. Although it is a common crisis which is confronting the Church, its forms are so varied, its expressions in many instances so elusive and the sense of Christian solidarity over against it so inarticulate, that the younger generation will not be equipped to withstand it except through a momentous and united confrontation with its meaning and with the resources potentially possessed by the Universal Church for facing it.

The World Conference of Christian Youth is conceived as one focussing point in a much larger movement. Its essential goal is the creation and expression within the younger generation of a larger sense of true Church and of the Church's responsibility to proclaim and apply its message in a world whose disintegrating forces are confronting it with one of the greatest tests of its history.

R. H. Edwin Espy.

THE FEDERAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AMERICA

Coming as it did at the culmination of the remarkable preaching mission projected and carried out by the Council in twentyeight major cities of the nation, the meeting of the full Council in bienniel session at Asbury Park, from December 9 to 11 last, felt unmistakably the inspiration and incentive of the greatest spiritual uplift in recent years among the Churches of its constituency. By the testimony of many, the most notable hours in the life of the Council were those during which the missioners who had addressed two million Church people throughout the land — together with 25,000 clergy — reported to the Council the impressions made upon them by their mission. For the first time in the history of divided Protestantism a whole nation's Church community had been deeply stirred by a united approach in which no denominational emphasis was found and which represented the spiritual unity already attained.

Outstanding in the reports of the Mission were the evidences that the Christians of America are more ready than many have supposed for a forward movement of Unity ; and at the close of the day when the reports of the Missioners were heard, an action was taken setting up a commission to study and report on practical steps which may be taken to increase Protestant church unity in outward forms which shall truly embody the inward spiritual unity so evident in recent months.

A careful review of the Mission, of which Pastor Henry L. Henriod of Geneva was a prominent participant much appreciated for his interpretation of the task of Christians in the modern world, shows that its strength lay in the sound intellectual presentation of both faith and practice in Christian terms. Such criticism as was heard of the Preaching Mission centred on two points : first, that there was no clear concept of « Una Sancta » to which hearers could be bound in more effective loyalty, and second, that despite the inclusion of a Negro and a Chinese among the missioners, there was not a sufficient inter-racial emphasis. The correction of these defects would really involve the correction of the situation out of which they spring. And that will take time. But in the continuing work of the Federal Council's Department of Evangelism which will carry forward the Preaching Mission in a somewhat modified form, these defects will be kept in mind and care taken to try to correct them.

Other matters of importance to come before the Council included : the preparations going forward in America for the World Conference on Church, Community and State at Oxford ; the growth of the cooperative movement as an expression of Christian concern for the economic order ; work with Christian youth ; the strengthening of interdenominational efforts in local communities ; the recognition of the place of women in the organised work of the Church and the building of international fellowship as a means to peace. This last received, as was fitting, a good deal of attention and the Council issued a strong statement which was a summary of the actions which it had taken in the past dealing with various questions related to the maintenance of peace. The tendency was to avoid the support of collective security, although there were many voices raised to question the Christian basis of complete neutrality. The compromise reached envisaged action by the United States Government making it possible to legalize trade with the nation internationally judged to have been the victim of aggression.

The Council elected as its new President Dr. Edgar de Witt Jones, a leader of the Disciples of Christ, and as Vice-President, Dr. Joseph Richard Sizoo, Pastor of the Reformed Church of St. Nicholas, in New York City.

Henry Smith Leiper.

BOOK REVIEWS

BROWN, WILLIAM ADAMS : *Church and State in Contemporary America.* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936). $2.75. 360 pages.

This book is the outcome of common study and research over a number of years on the part of outstanding experts, and it provides a very remarkable introduction into the present stage reached in the struggle for a new conception of the State in America. The detailed presentation which the book contains of the various Protestant and Catholic attitudes to the question, indicates the problems and responsibilities that are involved in seeking to arrive at a Christian understanding of the State. These pages reveal a keen awareness of the increase in the tensions between Christianity and the State and they discuss very thoroughly the foundations which must determine the action of the Christian and of the Churches with a view to solutions in the future. Specially comprehensive consideration is given to the problem of education as one of the decisive questions today on which the struggle around the Christian conception of the State must turn. It is also of particular significance that in the presentation of the whole problem, an essential role is allotted to the oecumenical points of view and emphatic treatment given to the importance of the development of the relations between Church and State for the oecumenical movement and its work. A series of appendices dealing with individual problems, and a full, systematic bibliography complete this valuable study, which forms an essential contribution to the preparatory work for the Oxford World Conference of Churches.

KELLER, ADOLF : *Church and State on the European Continent.* (London, Epworth Press, 1936). 282 pages. 6/—.

With these « Beckly Lectures », Professor Keller has rendered quite inestimable service to all those who have taken any part in the political and religious developments in present day Europe. The author has a world-wide reputation as a leader in the oecumenical movement and as a bridge-builder between the churches, — a reputation which this present book cannot but enhance. In striking, vivid language, the complicated developments of the present situation in Europe in the sphere of Church and State are presented to the Anglo-Saxon reader, for whom the book is primarily intended, and are interpreted in their paradigmatical significance for the whole of Christendom. But the book has an equally important mission to fulfil within the churches of the Continent. Written from a commanding vantage point and with an intimate personal knowledge of conditions, it provides an entirely new insight into recent events, even for those who actually lived through them, as well as for all who are concerned in the present oecumenical debate on Church and State.

It is the new, « revolutionary » Europe that the first, captivating part of this book reveals : its atmosphere of a fading culture, its anguish and titanic insolence, its crumbling institutions and its convulsive attempts at re-integration ; above all, its myths and ideologies, called forth from the depths of history and incorporated into the new, totalitarian politico-social-systems. The philosophies of Bolshevism, Fascism, National-Socialism and their attitudes to religion are here set forth with keen understanding and expert judgment. An instructive survey then follows on the legal relationships which have developed for the churches in the different countries of Europe. Further chapters, in which the author succeeds in sharing with the reader the reality of his own personal concern, describe in clear and richly documented detail the attitude of the « revolutionary » states to the churches and the efforts which the latter are making, in this totally altered situation, where persecution and martyrdom are becoming once more the genuine signs of the Christian life, to deliver their message anew. Professor Keller's book belongs among those which have been recommended as preparatory material to the delegates of the Oxford Conference. One may eagerly anticipate that it will also find grateful readers in the widest possible circles of all Churches.

PATON, WILLIAM : *Christianity in the Eastern Conflicts. A Study in Christianity, Communism and Nationalism in Asia.* (Edinburgh House Press, London, 1937). 224 pages. 2/6d.

All those who are in any way concerned with the struggle around the questions of church, community and state will derive from this book, written by one of the leading Christian experts on the Near and Far East, an immense wealth of suggestion and will also find in it very special documentation, enabling them as Christians to gain real insight into the problems, needs and tasks of the younger churches and of their communities. Mr Paton draws a vivid picture of conditions in Japan, China, India and the Near East : of mighty forces engaged in a life and death struggle ; of the Christian faith and the Christian fellowship faced with developments which threaten their very existence; and of the ever growing and deepening renewal of this faith and fellowship in the midst of all kinds of difficulties and dangers. In sketches of masterly conciseness and intuitive understanding, the latest developments in these vast countries stand forth in the light, in particular, of the problems of state, education, social formation and the world of nations. Delegates for Oxford and collaborators in the œcumenical exchange of thought which is concentrating on these subjects could hardly find a better introduction, as regards the situation in the Near and Far East, into the whole group of questions with which the Oxford Conference will deal, than this book, with its systematically coordinated impressions of a journey undertaken last winter and spring.

Clearly, however, as the book reveals the world-embracing character of questions and tasks with which the western churches too have to contend, no reader could fail to realise the immense diversity of concrete form in which the problems present themselves in the various countries. It is difficult to recall any other book which makes it so clearly possible for us Christians of the West to hear and understand what our fellow churches of those countries are experiencing and enduring as members of the one Body of Christ to which we all belong and for the realisation of which we ask in our life and work.

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